

# **City of College Park Resident Survey 2004**

## **SURVEY REPORT**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Resident Satisfaction Survey was administered as a mail-in survey in February 2004. Every household in College Park received a survey form, which is shown in Appendix A. There were 772 responses mailed in.

The following is an analysis of the results of the quantitative questions in the survey. The results are briefly reported in the following section and are compared with results from the 2002 survey where possible. Detailed results for each question in the survey are shown in Appendices B and C. Results of the 2002 survey are in Appendix D.

## **RESULTS**

### **Section 1: About You**

The distribution of respondents within College Park was very uneven, with a very large percentage (21%) living in the Hollywood neighborhood. Berwyn (12%), Calvert Hills (11%) and College Park Woods (11%) were also very highly represented. Although it is not possible to compare with the results of the 2002 survey, as the neighborhood categories were different, Hollywood was highly represented there as well (the Hollywood/Daniels Park/Branchville category had 28% of respondents).

The sex distribution of the respondents (44% male, 56% female) is consistent with the census and is comparable to 2002 results (46% male, 54% female.)

Respondents overwhelmingly are long-term College Park residents, with 36% having lived in College Park for more than 30 years. Again, this is very similar to results of the 2002 survey (38% of respondents having lived in College Park 30 or more years.) Respondents also tend to be older, with only 30% below the age of forty-five. This was also the case in the 2002 survey. Both of these trends show that respondents do not reflect the University population, as students are greatly underrepresented.

This is reflected in the employment questions of the survey: only 13% of respondents reported working at the University of Maryland (8% reported the same in the 2002 survey). The majority of employed residents reported working in Washington D.C. (25%) and Prince George's County (24%). The location of employment for respondents is evident with the relatively short distance commuting to work for most residents: more than half commuted less than 10 miles. A large portion of respondents reported being retired (32%), which reflects the age bias of the respondents.

Respondents using the metro generally drove (34%) or walked (32%) to the metro station. Almost no respondents used the PG "The Bus" (.3%)

Overall, respondents felt that traffic enforcement was acceptable in their neighborhood (53%) but almost no respondents felt that College Park is safer than it was two years ago (6%). Seventeen percent of respondents reported that a member of their household

has been a victim of a crime in College Park since 2002. Although 33% of respondents did not know whether they would be willing to pay for additional police services, more than 30% were willing to pay more, while 24% were not.

Most respondents of the survey (75%) reported having internet access, up from 72% in 2002.

## **Section 2: City Services**

There were only very minor changes in perceptions of parking enforcement since 2002, both in neighborhoods and commercial areas. Most respondents felt positively about both (54% excellent or good for commercial areas, 53% excellent or good in neighborhoods, compared to 54% and 55% respectively in 2002).

Perceptions of plantings were positive but very slightly lower than in 2002 (68% excellent or good versus 73% in 2002) although it should be noted that the wording of the question was different at that time, which perhaps explains the change. Perception of street and sidewalk maintenance declined noticeably, with 15% finding it poor in 2004 compared to 4% in 2002. Twenty-four percent of respondents found that there were not enough sidewalks and 15% thought the condition of sidewalks was poor.

Overall, respondents felt positively about street cleaning and all forms of trash pickup, but had much more mixed feelings about lighting. Perceptions of street cleaning declined since 2002 (63% excellent or good compared to 73% in 2002) as did perceptions of snow removal (73% excellent or good compared to 84% in 2002), street lighting (71% excellent or good compared to 76% in 2002). Results for regular trash pickup did not change, results for bulky and special trash pickup improved by approximately 1%, grass/leaf pickup declined (72% excellent or good compared to 80% in 2002) and recycling pickup declined slightly (84% excellent or good compared to 88% in 2002.)

Views on cleanliness in commercial areas were not very positive, nor were perceptions of property maintenance and of noise in commercial areas: all have a poor rating over 10%. All of these categories also saw a decline from the results of the 2002 survey. Distribution of survey results for the neighborhood categories regarding cleanliness, property maintenance and noise was very similar, with over 15% giving a poor rating in each category. Again, the results have declined since the 2002 survey, with excellent ratings dropping from about 16% to about 9%.

Respondents were overwhelmingly unfamiliar with city clinical services and city senior programs: both had over 82% of “don’t know”. The small portion of respondents who did have an opinion gave moderately good ratings: mostly good or fair. Results were similar to those of 2002.

Respondents mostly felt positive about public information efforts (35% excellent or good) although there was a slight decline from the 2002 survey. Ratings of the City

Planning and Community Development programs were more negative (34% fair or poor) and again there was a decline in perceptions since the 2002 survey.

Respondents felt very positively about City parks, playgrounds and athletic fields (47% good) and also positively rated City's responsiveness and timeliness to inquiries and complaints (42% good.) Ratings for City parks and City responsiveness stayed relatively constant since 2002

Overall, respondents felt positively about the quality of College Park services, with over 56% of respondents giving a good rating. However, there was a slight decline since 2002: 11% excellent compared to 20% in 2002, 5% poor compared to 2% in 2002.

Opinions regarding the way tax dollars are being spent were mixed, and a large portion of the population answered "don't know" (41%). There was a decline in ratings since 2002, and much more uncertainty on the part of respondents (only 13% replied "don't know" in 2002.)

### **Section 3: City Programs and Events**

For all city events, there was a high incidence of "don't know", which is to be expected. However, the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration and Maryland Day on Campus seemed to have had much higher attendance than the other events from the response of this survey. All of the events received positive ratings (more excellent than poor, more good than fair). There was a slight decline in ratings for all of the events, but these changes were negligible.

Respondents' thoughts about ease of obtaining information about the City government and its services were relatively positive but were not as good as reported in the 2002 survey (7% excellent compared to 15% in 2002, 9% poor compared to 5% in 2002).

Ratings of cable TV customer service were negative, with most respondents finding it fair or poor. Signal quality received a higher overall rating. Both were comparable to 2002 results. Few residents used the City of College Park website (67% don't know), and most that did use it only did so occasionally (28%) but those that did reviewed it positively. There was an improvement in the rating of the City website since 2002.

Respondents mostly found the usefulness of the "municipal scene" info in the Gazette to be "good" (40%). Most respondents did not watch College Park Channel 71 (68%) with only 6% watching it once or twice a month or more.

## **Section 4: County Services**

Respondents overall did not think very highly of Prince George's County Police Dept., with 17% giving the department a rating of poor and only 5% giving a rating of excellent. There was also a significant decline since 2002, where 12% gave the department a rating of excellent and only 10% gave it a rating of poor.

Ratings for County Fire and Emergency Medical Services were much higher, with 67% of respondents finding the services good or excellent and only 2% finding it poor. This distribution did not change noticeably since 2002.

Ratings for county maintenance of right of ways, sidewalks and roads was negative overall, with 12% giving a poor rating, 33% a fair rating and only 6% an excellent rating. There was a significant decline since 2002, when 9% gave a rating of excellent and only 6% gave a rating of poor.

Ratings for county zoning and planning were relatively neutral, with the largest group of respondents having no opinion at all (36%) and most other respondents giving a good (26%) or fair (22%) rating. The distribution for this question did not change since 2002.

Respondents generally felt positively about maintenance of M-NCPPC parks and athletic fields, with 10% giving a rating of excellent and 4% giving a rating of good. There was a slight decrease in ratings since 2002, but results were fairly similar.

## **Section 5: Quality of Life**

Respondents felt that pedestrian safety was not very good in the City, with many finding it only fair (35%) and 18% thinking it was poor. However, respondents felt much more positively about safety as drivers in College Park, with 60% finding it good or excellent.

Ratings for personal safety "in your neighborhood", at parks and playgrounds, in retail areas of the city and on the University of Maryland campus were very similar, with most giving a good rating, and comparable amounts of excellent and poor ratings. However, it should be noted that many respondents answered "don't know" (31%) for the UM rating, which is unsurprising since most respondents were not affiliated with the University. On the other hand, respondents were much more negative in their safety ratings at the College Park and Greenbelt metro stations, which had a poor rating of 13% and 14% respectively.

Neighborhood ratings for physical condition of housing, nearness to parks and open spaces, walking distance to a bus stop, access to shopping and other services, and access to employment were all positive overall, with a large majority of respondents giving wither excellent or good ratings. However, availability of sidewalks and hiking trails, availability of bike trails and bike lanes and access to quality schools for children all received much more mixed ratings, with a significant amount of the respondents giving a poor rating (7%, 18% and 18% respectively.)

For ratings of College Park as a whole, vibrancy of downtown, cost of living, shopping opportunities, dining opportunities, recreation opportunities and cultural opportunities all received mediocre ratings, often with as many as half of respondents giving a fair or poor rating. The transportation network received a much more favorable rating, with 53% giving it a positive rating. Most respondents did not have an opinion regarding employment opportunities: 59% responded “don’t know”.

Ratings of “your neighborhood, overall” were positive, with 12% giving a rating of excellent and 56% giving a rating of good. Ratings for “College Park, overall” were similarly positive (8% excellent, 53% good.)

Most residents wanted to see more restaurants (73%), music and bookstores (67%), grocery stores (66%), entertainment (58%), clothing and shoe stores (57%) and hardware and garden stores (53%) in College Park. However, respondents felt negatively about having additional jewelry stores (13%), furniture stores (24%), electronics stores (38%) and pharmacies (40%) in College Park.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Respondents of the survey were not very representative of the College Park population: they skewed much older, were long-term residents of College Park, most were not affiliated with the University, and most were clustered in certain neighborhoods. However, this is not much different than the respondents of the 2002 survey, indicating that comparisons between the two are appropriate.

Overall, respondents’ safety ratings of College Park were negative and showed a decline since 2002. Perceptions of Public Works were generally positive except for sidewalk quantity and maintenance. Respondents also felt more positively about code enforcement in their neighborhood than in College Park commercial areas. City services and events were generally positively rated, although many respondents were not aware of some services and did not attend City events.

Respondents’ views regarding County services were more negative, especially regarding the police department. Safety ratings were mixed in most areas and negative around both metro stations. However, neighborhood ratings were generally positive, as were College Park ratings. Overall, residents felt positively about College Park and expressed an interest in more stores of various kinds in the City.

The 2004 survey showed a slight decline in the rating of almost all events, services and ratings. These changes were generally not major, however, and could be explained by the different sample of the population that responded to the survey.